

Research Article

## The Meaning of Being a School Counselor (Phenomenology Studies on Fresh Graduate)

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine the meaning of being a guidance and counseling teacher at Samarinda Senior High School. This research used a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods. The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling criteria with fresh graduates and serving no more than one year, honorary status, not more than 25 years old, and working in a high school in Samarinda. Data collection techniques used in-depth interviews and were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) techniques. The analysis technique seeks to find the meanings of being a School Counselor. The results showed two main themes. Namely, the School Counselor is interpreted as a calling and to enjoy comfort. The sub-theme of vocation is not profit-oriented, realizing the future of students, and religious beliefs. The sub-theme of enjoying comfort is feeling comfortable when students are helped, enjoying being parents for students, and getting life lessons. Suggestions from this study are expected to be a reference in helping counseling teachers in the process of interpreting their work through positive environmental conditioning to increase their productivity at work.

Keywords: meaning of work; school counselor; phenomenological analysis

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui makna menjadi guru bimbingan dan konseling di SMA Samarinda. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode fenomenologi. Subjek penelitian dipilih menggunakan kriteria purposive sampling dengan lulusan baru dan menjabat tidak lebih dari satu tahun, status honorer, tidak lebih dari 25 tahun, dan bekerja di sebuah sekolah menengah di Samarinda. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara mendalam dan dianalisis menggunakan teknik Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Teknik analisis berusaha untuk menemukan makna menjadi Konselor Sekolah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dua tema utama. Yakni, Konselor Sekolah diartikan sebagai panggilan dan menikmati kenyamanan. Subtema vokasi tidak berorientasi pada keuntungan, mewujudkan masa depan mahasiswa, dan keyakinan agama. Sub tema menikmati kenyamanan adalah merasa nyaman saat siswa dibantu, menikmati menjadi orang tua bagi siswa, dan mendapatkan life lesson. Saran dari penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi acuan dalam membantu guru BK dalam proses menafsirkan karyanya melalui pengkondisian lingkungan yang positif untuk meningkatkan produktivitasnya dalam bekerja.

Kata kunci: makna kerja; konselor sekolah; analisis fenomenologi

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## Introduction

Work is a life activity carried out to achieve needs. Humans live to meet their needs, as well as declare their existence. If someone works because they are motivated by these conditions, it means that work is the most basic part of life because it is done only to gain social status in society. A qualitative study conducted by (Maslow, 1954) concluded that biological needs are the first level needs before reaching other levels of needs. This need refers to meeting the needs for survival (eating and continuing offspring). Humans cannot survive without eating. To meet these needs, humans try to survive by working in order to get income to eat until they reach other levels of need. The modern workplace is constantly changing, and new professions have sprung up to shape people's perceptions and perspectives in interpreting work. Being a YouTuber or content creator, for example, doesn't have to be bound by rigid rules, come early in the morning, and go home late in the evening.

Or, being a teacher in the interior of a village, you don't have to get an abundant salary because the kindness and hospitality of the villagers can pay for Everything. New professions have sprung up with incomes that cannot be underestimated. Changes to the work orientation, has opened job opportunities in various sectors, including the most potential is the creative industry.

New professions that have sprung up to do not necessarily make most of the millennial generation follow this trend. Some of them still want a profession that the previous generation has long craved to become an ASN, for example. Being an ASN today is not easy. Must go through a strict selection and compete with other participants. In the past, they even went through the first stage; be honorary. In fact, in terms of income, being honorary is less promising for welfare. Prosperity financially. Educators or teachers cannot be separated from the proliferation of young people who want to become ASN teachers. Not a few who choose to serve as honorary staff first. This phenomenon is, of course, somewhat lame because the new government regulation requires all honorary staff to take the CAT test like a general formation. This is, of course, a question, why do they want to become honorary staff even though their income is quite low. If they want, there are many other jobs that can be done, working in private companies or entrepreneurship.

Work activities carried out will shape experience. Work experience shapes the meaning of work for each individual (Harpaz, 2002). (Morin, 2004) added that the meaning of work is not only an effort to fulfill basic needs from an economic perspective but also social needs and self-actualization. Related research on work has been carried out by Max Weber in relation to religion to work ethics and ethics. Weber wrote a book with a title *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber, 1905). In his book, Weber believes that Protestant religions in Western Europe have played a major role in the need for achievement, which ultimately led to capitalism. The work ethic is known as the Protestant ethics taught by John Calvin. Calvin's teaching recommends that every human being should do something his best and strive to achieve (Weber, 2006). This teaching has implications for the hard work attitude of its followers. According to Weber, their goal is to work hard only to seek wealth, but to prepare themselves to be the chosen people to enter heaven. In essence, Protestant ethics teaches adherents to work hard and earnestly without being oriented towards material rewards (Nadjib, 2013).

Research conducted by (Puspita, 2012) Regarding the meaning of work, by taking samples from private hospital nurses in the city of Surabaya, it is concluded that the nurses interpret their

work as part of their mental calling because colleagues provide social support so that at work, they feel free and have enthusiasm for work. Research on a similar topic was carried out by (RUSDIANA W, 2013). They researched the meaning of work for Lombok picking workers in Pare. The research concludes that farmers interpret their work as part of their spare time, increase family income, as adaptive to the social environment, compulsion, the main source of income for family survival, efforts to raise capital, efforts to show self-existence. Another research conducted by Anshori & Yuwono (2012) regarding the meaning of the work of the Yogyakarta palace servants concludes that 1) Work is an activity that aims to seek calm, tranquility, and happiness, 2) Work with the principles of nyawiji, greget, sungguh, lan ora mingkuh, 3) Nguri-uri Kabudayan, 4) The principle of sugih without banda, 5) Ngalap blessings, 6) Working with understanding of sangkan paraning dumadi, 7) Golong gilig, manunggaling kawula lan gusti, 8) Work is an activity for sawung and ngluru prepat, 9) Hamemayu hayuning Bawana, hamemangun karinak tiyasing fellow, 10) Work intently. The three studies above show several differences in the meaning of work. Nurses who work in hospitals differ in their meaning of work when compared to Lombok farmers and courtiers in Yogyakarta keratin.

The meaning of work as a teacher is researched by (Tanudjaja, 2013) through quantitative studies. Her research examines the relationship between family-work conflicts, the meaning of work as a vocation, and perceptions of organizational support with work attachment to teachers. The study concluded that work-family conflicts act as job demands that create stressors for teachers, but there is a perception of organizational support and the meaning of work as a vocation that reduces stressors and increases work engagement. This shows that even though there is conflict in the family and at work, the teacher tries to reduce stress by getting support from peers and interpreting work as a calling.

The meaning of work is a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations that a person has in relation to work. The meaning of work for someone will have an impact on that person's morale. Spirit of work is formed from the basis of understanding and individual spirituality, which in turn will provide a strong motivation boost for him to work optimally (Rosso et al., 2010). The phenomenon that occurs in the city of Samarinda is the lack of absorption of alumni of counseling guidance in schools. One of the state universities in Samarinda, which supplies guidance and counseling teachers, annually accepts eighty new students. However, in reality, only a few alumni work as School Counselor. Students of the 2012 class alone, of the eighty alumni, no more than half of them are School Counselor. So, what causes a small proportion of counseling guidance alumni to choose a career path to become teachers, and how do they interpret their work as School Counselor? This research will explore the meaning of the work of School Counselor in the city of Samarinda.

## Method

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach to determine the meaning of being a School Counselor for fresh graduates in Samarinda city. The phenomenological approach is a methodological researcher's effort to create complex pictures, deepen words, conduct studies in natural situations, and make detailed reports from the views of research subjects. (Creswell, 1998). In essence, a phenomenological approach is used to determine the meaning of an individual for his own experience.

### **Research subject**

The subjects of this study were four people who were determined by purposive sampling. Criteria for research subjects are School Counselor who are fresh graduates and serve no more than one year, are honorary status, not more than 25 years old, and work in a public school in Samarinda City. The participants were anonymized, namely subjects A, B, C, and D. The four subjects of the study would be secondary data or the main data in this study. Primary data, namely representatives of each student who has been served by the School Counselor and related documents that can strengthen research data.

### **Data collection technique**

The data collection techniques used were in-depth interviews and observations. Interviews are arranged in such a way as to run naturally and as is. Researchers build strong emotional relationships so that the data obtained can be in-depth. Broadly speaking, the interview questions revolve around the reasons for becoming guidance and counseling teachers, what it means to be a guidance and counseling teacher, what makes them survive as guidance and counseling teachers, and how they view other more lucrative professions. Interviews were conducted three times to each research subject to test the consistency of the data disclosed.

Observations were made by the researcher to observe the attitudes and behavior of the research subjects. Observations were made when researchers visited and had direct conversations with guidance and counseling teachers, as well as seeing and observing firsthand the performance of the School Counselor. Data from observations were compared with interviews to test the suitability between the two.

### **Data analysis technique**

Data analysis using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) with steps from (Smith & Osborn, 2009), namely: transcribing all interview data into verbatim, the researcher coding by commenting on each transcript, the comments on the transcript are reread to make a conceptual label, then labels are grouped based on the similarity of meaning and given the name of the sub-theme. Sub-themes are then analyzed to be grouped based on the closeness of meaning and given the name of the main theme. The process of analyzing data to finding themes is an attempt to arrive at research conclusions. Some original data (extract) is written in the research report to maintain the transparency of the research. This data extraction is referred to as grounding, for example (Elliott et al., 1999).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **1. Result**

This study aims to find the meaning of being a guidance and counseling teacher. The data obtained during interviews and observations are categorized based on the main theme according to the research objectives. The main themes are categorized into three, namely being a teacher as a calling, enjoying the comfort, and as a distraction.

#### **Not Profit Oriented**

"So far, I have never regretted that I took BK major. In fact, from this department, I can get to know myself better, even though the salary is not much, only 1.1 million".

Subject A argued that even though his salary was not what he expected, by gaining an understanding of himself, he could be grateful, especially at his very young age. Then subject B argued.

"When it comes to profit, maybe I've been looking for another place with a lot more salary, bro. At my place, the salary is low, bro, maybe it's just enough for transportation".

Subject B made a statement that he was still consistent in becoming a School Counselor even though his salary was only sufficient for transport costs. For him, fortune has been arranged by Allah; the issue of salary is only nominal.

When subject C was asked about why he didn't just become a private employee because he paid more, he then answered.

"Why not become a private employee. Not that interest, bro. His interest is in the world of education. He was practicing knowledge. God willing, even though you can't do material deeds. Charity of knowledge can benefit hehe."

### **Realizing the Future of Students**

"For me, realizing the future of students is extraordinary work. Until now, I still often communicate with students who have finished. It feels like a bonus; the feeling of being called to do better for the students is getting motivated". Subject D assumed that his work as a guidance and counseling teacher was an attempt to realize the future of students. According to him, this is an extraordinary calling. He keeps trying to motivate himself to provide better service for students.

### **Religious Beliefs**

"I work as a School Counselor because I believe that what I am doing will become a charity in the future. Everything I do I intend because of Allah. I make this as my act of worship". Subject A assumed that what he was doing was an animal Jariyah; every effort he made was intended for Allah's sake. This statement is subject to E's belief in his religious teachings. For him, working as a School Counselor is a calling.

### **A sense of comfort when students are helped**

"Because I met children whose conditions were" so "I was touched, mas hehe. Need attention and affection. I just feel comfortable when I am close to them". Subject B felt that the meaning of being a guidance and counseling teacher for himself was to enjoy comfort when he could help students. Subject B is comfortable because it can help students with problems. For him, this feeling of comfort made him a counseling teacher.

### **Enjoying Parenting Students**

"School Counselor are not just a place for counseling, but how to be parents for those in need. So far, most of my students are from broken home families and don't pay attention to. In my school's counseling guidance system, which in the end had to be a parent in the real sense, someone became a father, and I became the mother of the children. It becomes something that is comfortable for me".

Subject C tried to explain the condition of his school and then assumed that he was a mother for the students in the true sense. Because many students lack parental love. For him, it was a treatment that made him feel good.

## Get Life Lessons

"From these students, I actually learned a lot, many things I can learn from experience, for example ... saying" no "to children. We often do it many times, "and almost everyone considers it normal when we want to reject the child's attitude with the word" no. " But in fact that one word, if the placement is not right, has a big enough impact on the child in the future."

Subject D assumed that being a guidance and counseling teacher was an attempt to learn again. Instead, he learns from his students. Because according to him, just one word, or a bad response to students, will have an impact on students. From there, he learned to use the appropriate words in their placement.

## 2. Discussion

The results showed three main themes of the meaning of being a School Counselor, first as a calling, second enjoying the comfort, and third as a stepping stone. Of the three themes, then form a sub-theme. The sub-theme of soul calling; not profit-oriented, realizing the future of students, and religious beliefs. The sub-theme of enjoying comfort; feel comfortable when students are helped, enjoy being parents for students and get life lessons—the stepping stone sub-theme; waiting to be ASN and not easy to be laid off.

The results showed that there were several parts of the statements of research subjects that were contradicting each other, for example, making the work of guidance and counseling teachers a soul calling but on the other hand, the research subjects considered that they were guidance and counseling teachers because they were considered a safe profession when compared to other jobs, for example in private, with the result of layoffs.

Research conducted by [Kim and Ling \(2001\)](#) concluded that the job role describes a lot of things related to the way a person works. Each dimension of the job role includes aspects of work material that can affect one's work productivity. The greater the diversity of work activities carried out, the more meaningful a person will feel. Counseling teachers who feel that their work is dynamic and diverse, they will try to increase their productivity. The thing to note is, of course, the role of diversity in working in shaping the meaning of work.

The formation of the meaning of work is also influenced by religious teachings, as expressed by [\(Weber, 2006\)](#). Weber highlighted that Protestant doctrine influences the work ethic of a Christian. This doctrine emphasizes that work is part of worship and a call to organize society. The meaning of work referred to by Weber, is a sacred calling from God. So according to Weber, individuals who have a strong understanding of religion will try to work hard in completing their work. [Keller \(2014\)](#) states that work is God's plan from the beginning and is a gift to mankind. Before the Fall, humans were given the mandate to work on the earth. This is a clear command from God for humans to work to produce something. Any work must be done with sincerity for the glory of God. Therefore, every human being who works must continue to improve his competence in order to be able to work professionally, but still in firm faith and hope in God.

The meaning of work as a calling for the soul is related to religious teachings. This is, of course, based on someone's belief. Belief in strong religious teachings, giving interpretations to individuals about its meaning in doing a job. [Stuart \(2014\)](#) about the main aspects of individual behavior, namely individuals always act in accordance with the meaning (possessed and experienced) so that guidance and counseling teachers work to enjoy the comfort they experience from every service provided to the counselee. The meaning exists because they

interact with them in their work. They must implement this meaning by continuing to work as guidance and counseling teachers who feel comfortable in themselves. This shows the fact that the research data that categorizes the meaning of work into a sub-theme of feeling comfortable when helping students, enjoying being parents for students, and getting life lessons, is evidence that guidance and counseling teachers interact in providing services.

## **Conclusion**

Work is part of an effort to meet needs, as well as to find the meaning of life. The meaning of each individual's work is different, depending on the beliefs and conditions of the work environment. However, it cannot be denied that in one profession, individuals build perceptions of the meaningfulness of their work in general. If the work environment is comfortable, the individual will build a positive work meaning. The job as a guidance and counseling teacher is not easy. Jobs that involve interaction between counselees require mature counselor interpersonal skills. The results showed that guidance and counseling teachers interpreted their work as a calling, enjoying the comfort, and as a distraction. The theme of calling the soul in the form of a School Counselor who is not for profit is a noble job because it strives to realize the future of students, and as part of the religious beliefs, they understand. Furthermore, guidance and counseling teachers interpret their work to enjoy comfort with sub-themes; feel comfortable helping students, enjoy being parents to students, and they learn life lessons from the relief efforts being put in. Suggestions from this study are expected to be a reference in helping counseling teachers in the process of interpreting their work through positive environmental conditioning to increase their productivity at work.

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